

Teacher Education Graduate Tracer Study from 2010 to 2014 in One State University in Batangas, Philippines

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**Anania B. Aquino (Ed.D), Estelito J. Punongbayan,
Lydia P. Macalaguim, Simeona M. Bauyon, Roman A. Rodriguez, Jr,
Gliceria R. Quizon**
College of Teacher Education, Batangas State University ARASOF –
Nasugbu, Nasugbu, Batangas, Philippines
anania1969@gmail.com

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Abstract - *Teacher Education institutions primarily aim of producing competent and highly qualified graduates employable here and abroad. Tracer studies on graduates can appropriately provide valuable information for evaluating the results of the education and training of a specific institution of higher education. It collects essential information concerning the employment profile of graduates, their undergraduate experience, the first and current jobs of graduates and the relevance of their educational background and skills required in their job. The main objective of this study was to trace the employment profile of the graduates after they obtained their teacher education degree. The descriptive survey method of research was applied to this research with a survey questionnaire as the main data gathering instrument. It analyzed data from 129 respondents characterized by a preponderance of females over male as females and unmarried or single graduates as opposed to those who were married. The study found that there were more respondents who finished Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED) over Bachelor of Elementary Education. They obtained this degree as they believed that teaching is a rewarding and challenging profession, Majority are Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) passers and are employed in public schools at the time of the study. Their present job, mostly professional in nature, was also their first job and relevant to their degree. It took only a moderate period of time for most graduates to land a job. Most stay in their job for economic reason, finding communication skills and human relation skills as part of their teacher education preparation very relevant to their jobs.*

Keywords - *graduate tracer. teacher education graduates. employability of graduates. Employment status.*

INTRODUCTION

People go to universities and finish college degree with the goal of being employed and earn a living. Teacher Education institutions primarily aim of producing competent and highly qualified graduates employable here and abroad. They employ a variety of strategies to realize this relevant goal. They continually enhance their curriculum content and delivery through employing and maintaining competent faculty members, improving instructional facilities, providing relevant student support systems, and cultivating a culture of quality and excellence. Through these concerted efforts, it is hoped that they would result to high-quality teacher education

preparation and provide graduates with better employment opportunities.

The College of Teacher Education at Batangas State University (BSU) ARASOF – Nasugbu Campus, Batangas, Philippines has its share of this role and the goal of the providing quality training among its students. One of the very small numbers of teacher education institutions in Western Batangas, it provides preparation for students wanting to have a stint in the teaching profession. To monitor its performance and the relevance of its curriculum, the college regularly conducts graduates tracer studies.

Graduate tracer studies are one form of empirical study that can appropriately provide valuable information for evaluating the results of the education

and training of a specific institution of higher education[1]. It can collect essential information concerning the employment profile of graduates[2], their undergraduate experience, the first and current jobs of graduates [3],and the relevance of their educational background and skills required in their job. Graduate tracer study can also collect data on the relevance of the curriculum [4] and graduates' level of satisfaction of their academic preparation [5].

By obtaining this kind of information, the College of Teacher Education and the entire BSU ARASOF – Nasugbu Campus, can show the success of its educational efforts pertaining to its graduates, the labor market, and employers. Strategically, the institution can identify areas for growth and development in the context of quality assurance and the provision of relevant preparation and training. Any possible deficits in its program offerings in terms of administration, content, delivery and relevance can be ascertained and improved.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study was to trace the employment profile of the graduates after they obtained their teacher education degree. Specifically, it also determined the graduates' employment status as well as the transition time from graduation to employment and their job satisfaction. The study also surveyed the relevance of the respondents' first job to their education degree in college. The survey also aimed to assess the graduates' perception on the contribution of the university training to the graduates' skills development and the degree of effectiveness, adequacy and relevance of their pre – service teacher education training.

METHODS

To attain the objectives of the study, the researchers applied the descriptive survey method of research. They used a survey questionnaire based on Commission on Higher Education graduate tracer study, which is slightly modified for the purpose of the study.

The data gathering process commenced in the last quarter of 2014. To reach graduates, enrolled students were asked if they know previous graduates of the college. Those who answered affirmatively were given survey questionnaires and instructed about how to hand – in the instrument to the prospective respondents and likewise, to retrieve them. Pre –

service teachers deployed in different schools were also given questionnaires to reach graduates. Faculty and employees were also given questionnaires for distribution to increase the number of participants of the study. Follow – up of questionnaire distribution and retrieval were observed. After six months, only 129 questionnaires were successfully retrieved by the researchers and these were used for the study. Of this number of respondents, 19 came from batch 2010, 23 from 2011, 28 from 2012, 29 from 2013 and 30 from 2014.

The 129 respondents who willingly participated in the study were characterized by a preponderance of females over male as females constitute 66% and males made - up 34 percent. Further, a higher degree of response was turned- in by unmarried or single graduates (90 or 70%) as opposed to those who were married (39 or 30%).

The data gathered were tallied, analyzed, and interpreted. Frequency, ranking and weighted mean were used to describe the typicality of responses of the graduates.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Educational Background of the Graduates

Level	f	%
Bachelor's Degree of BSED	83	64%
Bachelor's Degree of BEED	46	36%
Total	129	100%

A higher degree of participation was noted among Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED) graduates (83 or 64%) as compared to Bachelor of Secondary Education (BEED) graduates (46 or 100%). A review of a number of graduates would reveal that the College of Teacher Education graduated more BSED than BEED in the years covered by the tracer study, that of 2010 -2014.

For the graduates' reasons for taking such programs, answers vary and Table 2 shows their responses.

Table 2. The Respondents' Reasons for Taking either the BSED or BEED Course

Reasons*	f
Really prefer the program	23
To have a rewarding and challenging profession	55
Job Security	44
Influenced by Parents	12
Love a couple of months off in the summer	1

*Multiple – responses Item

There are 55 of them who replied that these programs would give them the chance to have a rewarding and challenging profession such as teaching. According to the respondents, they consider teaching as a rewarding and challenging profession because it would give them the prospect of molding the youth and facilitating learning among them, thus, being instrumental in their holistic development. In addition, teaching is a vocation that calls for service and self – sacrifice. Forty - four graduates replied the teaching job is one of the most stable jobs in the Philippines, most especially if one is employed in the government sector. Some 23 graduates responded that it was the course or program that they really liked, so they decided and finished the program. A few revealed (12) that they were influenced by their parents, hence they took the course/program. Whatever their reasons were, they were enough to motivate them to take the program and finish it at the prescribed time of four years.

casual status, implying they are employed under the Nasugbu Local School Board. Twenty – two are hired on a contractual basis, revealing that they are employed in the private sector.

The public sector had overtaken the private sector as the most important source of employment for graduates. The preference to teach in public schools is evident in the employment status of regular/permanent of the graduates. As public schools under the Department of Basic Education of the Philippine government offer higher salary and better benefits compared with most private schools, teacher education graduates tend to apply in public schools once they passed the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET). It must be noted here that private schools charge tuition and other fees to students to be able to finance their operations, including the salary of their teachers and other employees. Charging high tuition and other fees, which oftentimes can only be afforded by affluent families, might result to low enrollment and affect the salaries of their teachers.

Table 3. Employment Status

Employment Status		f	%
Employed	Regular/Permanent	76	91.5
	Temporary	8	
	Casual	3	
	Contractual	22	
Total		118	
Not Employed		7	5.4
Never Been Employed		4	3.1
Total		129	100

In general, there is a higher percentage of employed graduates over the unemployed ones. The survey shows that 109 or 91.5% are employed at the time of the study while 7 or 13% are not employed. There are 4 (3%) of them who admitted that they have never been employed since they graduated from college. Relative to this finding, Gines [6] also reported a high employment rate among teacher education graduates of a normal university in the Philippines. Further, similar finding was also obtained by Canizares [7] in her study of teacher education graduates who specialized in science and mathematics.

With respect to those who are employed, who are all employed locally or within the country, 76 were regular/permanent, which means that they are connected with the Department of Education. Eight were on temporary status of employment and 3 are on

Teacher Education Graduate unemployment stands at 9 percent. Of this percentage, 8 disclosed they are pursuing or enrolled in post – graduate study and were not in a hurry to find a job. Three of them exposed having family concerns and decided not to find a job. Another three graduates revealed that they lacked the experience, hence they find it somewhat difficult to find a job.

The data shows that a small percentage of the graduates are unemployed and seemed to favor employment than establishing their own business. Similar findings were also revealed in the study conducted by Cardona and Andres [8] involving mathematics education graduates. They reported that a small number of respondents were unemployed as majority were employed as teachers in public schools.

Details about The Graduates’ First Job, How They Found it, The Length of Time It Took Them to Land Their First Job and Their Reasons for Staying in their Job

The analysis of data reveals that the majority or 65 of them admitted that their job at the time of the study was their first job while the rest indicated that it was not. This means that they have been on this job for at least one year.

When asked how they were able to find their first job, 42 replied they were recommended by someone they know, which means that they know somebody

who was influential in the institution they had their first job. Twenty-eight answered they got their first job as a walk – in the applicant, revealing that they kept themselves updated of the job vacancy in the respective sector they had their first job.

Thirteen learned about the job vacancy from their friends and so they applied for the job and successfully got one.

Twelve indicated that they got their first job as arranged by the placement officer of the college (BatStateU ARASOF) where they graduated, a response indicating the efforts and support to graduates of BatStateU ARASOF Placement Office.

A few specified that they landed their first job as a response to an advertisement posted by the institution. Advertising is a strategy of attracting many applicants for a job vacancy, affording the organization to hire highly qualified applicants. Nengomasha and Chiware[3] also reported similar responses from graduates.

One respondent unveiled that he had his first job at the business owned by her family, which could be interpreted that this job had been long waiting for him even before graduation and therefore, he did not find it hard to find an employment.

The respondents were also asked about the length of time it took them to land this first job. The majority (41 or 34.2%) replied 1-6 months, followed by those (39 or 32.5%) who found a job in less than a month, and by those who found the job within the span of 1-2 years (12 or 10%). There are 8 or 7% who found their first job in a span of 7 – 11 months and three of them after 2-3 years of job hunting. Relevant to this finding is that of Colarte [9] on teacher education graduates of one university in the Philippines. This study found that more than one-half of the respondents of the study were employed in less than a year period from graduation.

Most of the respondents' first job were of professional nature (37%) meaning they were able to take advantage of their college degree in landing their first job. A few indicated landing their first job as an executive or manager, which is usually rare for fresh college graduates. In contrast, there are 18 or 15 percent who accepted a clerical position just so that they would be earning a living and be productive.

When asked about their reasons for staying in their present employment that happens to be their first job, many (36 of them) unanimously answered because of the salary and benefits, with a few

indicating that this is because of the challenge posed by their career, it is related to their degree and their special skill, and one revealed because of family influence.

Relevance of the Respondents' First Job to their Education Degree in College

A certain degree of underutilization of skills was apparent among the participants of the study. Although a high percentage of the employed (88 or 68%) graduates) disclosed that their first job was related to their college degree of BSED or BEED, some 30 or 32 percent admitted that it was not. This could be a consequence of their need to earn a living hence they accepted the job although it was not related to their college preparation. The same trend of having a certain degree of underutilization of skills among the graduates was also found by Torres[10]. Although she found at the time of her study that there were many graduates employed as teachers, there is a considerable number of respondents employed in non-teaching jobs.

Of the latter 30 respondents, they divulged that they accepted the job, although not related to their BSED or BEED degree, for various reasons. These reasons included good salaries and benefits, career challenge, related to a special skill they possess, and the proximity of the workplace to their residence. There are graduates of CTE employed in call centers in Manila and other nearby provinces. These graduates, when interviewed, admitted being lured by the good salaries and benefits provided by the company hence they accepted the job. Aside from this, they graduates feel that this job is related to their English communication skills. Likewise, they claim that they are provided with the opportunity to improve this skill along with the other skills when they work in call centers.

Table 4. Part of the Curriculum Graduates Found Most Useful in their First Job

	f	%	Rank
Communication Skills	83	64	1
Human Relation Skills	29	23	2
Entrepreneurial Skills	5	4	3.5
Information Technology Skills	5	4	3.5
Problem – Solving Skills	3	2	5
Critical Thinking Skills	4	3	4
	129	100	

When asked about the part of the curriculum they found most useful in their first job, the majority of respondents replied communication skills (83 or 64%). This is probably because teaching involves dealing with other people and communication skills are very important in this aspect. Having good communication skills is essential in establishing a good interpersonal relationship, and this is a requisite in teaching. Relevant to this, the respondents bared that human relation skills were also useful in their first job. Analogous findings on communication skills and human relation skills were also obtained by Dumas and Dumlao [11], Loquias[12] and on the part of the curriculum BEED graduates found most useful in their first job. The importance of communication skills and human relation skills in the teaching job is also reported by Gines[6] in her tracer study of graduates from a normal school in the Philippines.

Only a few found entrepreneurial skills (4%), information technology skills (4%), problem – solving skills (2%), and critical thinking skills (3%) useful in their first job. In contrast, Loquias[12] noted that the skills the graduates found most useful to graduates' first jobs include critical thinking, problem solving in addition to communication skills. This maybe so as her respondents were Electronics Engineering graduates as compared to the present study of teacher education graduates.

CONCLUSIONS

The majority of respondents were Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED) graduates. Further, most believe that teaching is a rewarding and challenging profession, hence they took up either BSED or BEED degree. A considerably high percentage of respondents are LET passers, employed in public schools at the time of the study. Their present job, mostly professional in nature, was also their first job and relevant to their degree. It took only a moderate period of time for most graduates to land a job. Most stay in their job for economic reason, finding communication skills and human relation skills as part of their teacher education preparation very relevant to their jobs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In as much as the study revealed that there is percentage of graduates who are not yet employed and never been employed, albeit the fact that it is low, this information should be used by the CTE to enhance

their linkage with the different schools in the immediate vicinity and the nearby towns as well. This may improve graduates chances of finding employment.

Of paramount importance is to enhance further its curriculum to ensure its relevance and responsiveness to the needs of the stakeholders involved. The CTE must continually aspire for graduates to be provided with relevant and effective teacher education training to escalate their employment prospects after graduation and passing the LET. Faculty competence and their use of effective teaching strategies must be enhanced. Relevant instructional materials should be made available. Student support should be further improved. Attention must also be given to the part of the curriculum the graduates found useful in their first job. This must be seriously considered in providing a balance and relevant training for the students so that they will become more competent in the workplace.

Although the researchers were persistent in their efforts of soliciting the involvement of many graduates, there was a limited number of graduates who participated in the study, which poses limitation to the study and may affect the generalizability of findings. In view of this limitation, a future study that is more comprehensive in scope targeting a higher number of respondents is recommended to enhance the generalizability of results. This study may also include an exploration of the professional movement and promotion of graduates in the workplace.

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